



## Council Report for July 2023

Written by your local Conservative team to keep you up to date.

Councillor Clive Hooker - Downlands Ward

### West Berkshire Council

#### Council

Council met on 20<sup>th</sup> July to:

- Appoint new Honorary Alderman (pictured)
- Recognise members for their Long Service
- Agree a response to the Hedgehog petition
- Agree the composition of the Joint Public Protection Committee



Papers and a recording of the meeting can be found [here](#).

The next meeting is on 5<sup>th</sup> October.

#### Executive

Executive met on 6<sup>th</sup> July to agree:

- A response to the Charges and Readibus petitions
- Early Years Childcare Sufficiency Report
- Contracts for Award under Delegated Authority from Executive
- The Call-In of Executive Decision EX4332: Newbury Sports Hub

Papers and a recording of the meeting can be found [here](#).

The next meeting is on 21<sup>st</sup> September.

#### Leisure

##### *New Pump Track at Goldwell Park*

A brand new pump track will soon be installed to replace the existing dirt track at the top of Goldwell Park in Newbury. It will replace the current track, which has been in situ for around 20 years. Due to the tarmac surfacing, pump tracks are suitable for use whatever the weather and will provide a valuable facility to the local community.

A pump track is a continuous circuit for wheeled sports equipment, such as scooters and BMX bikes, and is becoming more popular in public spaces. It does not



require pedalling or pushing, but a “pumping” action to maintain momentum. The track is a looped sequence of rollers and berms (swoopy, banked turns) for bike riders of all ages.

The contractor began setting up the site in the week beginning Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July, with work starting on 7<sup>th</sup> August. The work is expected to last around eight weeks.

### ***Waterside Centre***



The summer programme of activities at the Waterside Centre in Newbury is now open for residents to book.

The Summer Kids Club for primary school age children will run from 1-25 August, offering sports, games and arts and crafts between 8:30 and 12:30.

The Summer School Club for secondary school children runs on the same dates from 4-8pm and offers sports, games, arts and crafts and paddling.

### ***Summer Reading Challenge***

The Summer Reading Challenge 2023 is off to a fantastic start with over 1,500 children already taking part.

There's still time to join in. Residents aged 4-11 can visit their local library to sign up and read up to six library books by 15 September and collect free incentives for their achievements as they read – with medals, certificates and a free swim voucher provided by Everyone Active for everyone who completes the challenge.

This year's theme is 'Ready, Set, Read!' which is delivered in partnership with national children's charity Youth Sport Trust and aims to empower young people to unleash the power of play, sport and physical activity through reading.



Illustrations by Loretta Schauer and logo artwork by Lizzie Everard. All © The Reading Agency 2023.

### ***Summer book challenge for everyone 12+***

In addition to the annual Summer Reading Challenge, which is for children aged 4-11, there is a challenge for everyone 12 years old and over as well!

Residents can pick up a Book Challenge card when they next visit a library to find suggestions of different types of books to read. If they choose three of these and read the books before 15 September and the suggestions selected are in a vertical, horizontal or diagonal row on the card, they can enter a prize draw in the local library.

Residents can ask for more details in their local library for more details.

### ***Summer activities in West Berkshire libraries***

Most of the regular activities for children take a break during the school holidays, but some continue and others start! For instance, this summer residents will find weekly Rhymetimes in Burghfield Common, Hungerford and Newbury libraries.

The All Sorts Club at Lambourn Library, the Pot-luck Club at Hungerford Library and the children's craft clubs at Burghfield Common, Hungerford and Theale libraries are all continuing, along with Theale Library's Duplo Play sessions, with extra sessions taking place every Wednesday, 10.45am-2.15pm.

There are also a number of our popular LEGO sessions taking place at Burghfield Common, Newbury, Pangbourne, Thatcham and Theale libraries.

Additional activities also include:

- Sports-themed crafts at Theale Library on 2, 9 and 30 August, 1.30-3.30pm: join a skittles tournament, make a hoopla set or design a table-top football pitch.
- Explore Learning workshops at libraries in Burghfield Common on 10 August, Newbury on 18 August and Pangbourne on 22 August, all 11am-12.30pm.
- Summer crafts every Friday in August at Thatcham Library, 10.30-11.30am, and on Saturday mornings throughout the school holidays at Lambourn Library, 10.30am-12pm.
- Board Games Club at Pangbourne Library on 11, 18 and 25 August, plus 1 September, 2-4pm.

A variety of activities at Newbury Library are also happening on 16, 22 and 30 August, 2-4pm, in connection with the town's Festival of the Moon.

Residents can check with their local library to find out what's happening to the weekly and monthly events near them.

### ***Free gym & swim memberships for people with Parkinson's***

Leisure centres across West Berkshire are offering free membership to people who are living with Parkinson's disease thanks to a new initiative by Parkinson's UK.

The free membership will give residents access to gym, swim and group exercise classes, as well as online Synergy Dance classes. A free membership will also be given to carers to provide support if needed.

Parkinson's is the fastest-growing neurological condition in the world and there is currently no cure. It affects around 145,000 people in the UK and there are more than 40 symptoms, from tremor and pain to anxiety. People living with the condition find various activities, such as walking and dance, beneficial in managing their symptoms.



## **Education**

### ***Brand new 3G football pitch coming to Hungerford***



Residents in Hungerford and beyond are set to benefit from fresh investment into local football facilities. The £800,000 project, jointly funded by several organisations, will deliver a new full-size 3G football turf pitch at John O' Gaunt Secondary School. Work has started and this exciting project is due for completion in mid-October this year.



## ***The Castle @ Theale is hiring***

The Castle @ Theale, a new specialist education centre for children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties, opened in September 2022 and is making a huge difference to the lives of disadvantaged children in West Berkshire. Leaders at The Castle School are excited to announce that this setting will be expanding in September 2023 to support more children. There are now a range of exciting opportunities to work at this innovative new centre.



Caroline Whitlock, Deputy Head of The Castle School, said: “We’re searching for caring, dynamic and ambitious teaching assistants and a specialist DT/Horticulture Teacher to help us shape the Castle @ Theale. If any of these opportunities excites you as much as they do us, we’d love for you to visit our brand new site and to ask any questions you may have about our vision”.

To find out more about the available roles, interested applicants should arrange a visit or ask further questions, by contacting Cassy Clark on 01635 42976 or via email to: [HR@castle.w-berks.sch.uk](mailto:HR@castle.w-berks.sch.uk). Applications can be made via the school’s portal on TES.

## **Transport**

### ***Road Closure – Kings Road, Newbury***

Kings Road in Newbury will be closed from 1 August to 5 December 2023 for urgent gas mains replacement. The closure will be between its junction with Boundary Road and its junction with Hectors Way.

The diversion will be signed on site and residential access will be maintained throughout - vehicular access will be permitted as works progress. Please note blue light access is via the diversion route.

Resident’s enquiries should be directed to SGN on 08009 121 700 or via [email](#). A plan of the closure can be found [here](#), or download [this letter from SGN](#) for full details.

### ***New bus service launches between Newbury and Harwell***

A new bus service has been launched linking Newbury to Harwell Campus and Didcot Railway station following a campaign by Laura Farris MP.

The new X34 Thames Travel service will operate every hour on Mondays to Saturdays and provide a new fast connection to Newbury. Within Newbury, buses will call at the Vodafone Roundabout bus stop, then those along London Road and Park Way and Stand D in Newbury Wharf Bus Station. In further good news for passengers, single adult fares on the new service will be covered by the government’s current £2 fare cap on single adult journeys.



The new route launched on 23 July 2023, and follows a roadshow on Thursday 6 July at Harwell Campus to celebrate the launch of the service which was attended by Laura and county councillors alongside senior

representatives from Harwell Campus, Oxfordshire County Council, West Berkshire District Council and Thames Travel.

The new buses have free on-board Wi-Fi, next stop announcements and USB charging points. The new timetable can be found [here](#).

## Economy

### *Newbury Town Centre pedestrianisation*

Pedestrianisation in Newbury town centre could be extended to midnight each day under a trial proposed by the new Liberal administration.

The proposal would see the pedestrianised zone, which currently runs from 10am to 5pm, extended until midnight. The trial will last for at least six months with residents invited to share their experiences of the new arrangements in a survey after the trial has started.



Conservative Councillors have spoken with many businesses who have concerns about delivery access to their buildings and residents with mobility issues who are concerned how they will access their favourite local stores, and have called for the Administration to consult with residents about potential issues so they can be mitigated.

So far, these calls to listen have been ignored by the Liberal administration, though they have paused the project and we hope they will start listening to residents soon so that this project has

the best chance of success.

### *Shaw House Summer Fair*

The Shaw House Summer Fair was a success. The shopping stalls were popular with the adults, whilst the bouncy castles, Mr Muddle the Magician and activity stalls were a favourite with the children. Alongside ripples of laughter, the afternoon was soundtracked by the talented Izzy Adams and her keyboard. A big shout out must also go to all the furry friends who came to spread the joy.



## Community

### *Community Alcohol Partnership launches in West Berkshire*

The new Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) brings together organisations including West Berkshire Council, Thames Valley Police, schools, alcohol services and local retailers to help reduce the crime, anti-social behaviour and harm caused by underage drinking.

The Community Alcohol Partnership includes:

- Working alongside local retailers to prevent underage and proxy alcohol sales. Proxy sales are when a person aged 18 or over buys alcohol on behalf of an underage person
- Providing help, support and information for young people through youth services and local schools

The partnership will also aim to work more closely with partnership organisations to provide alcohol health harm workshops in youth settings and provide good practice advice to retailers on development of a challenge 25 policy.

## ***Newbury Show***

The Newbury & District Agricultural Society Newbury Show is making a return on 16 and 17 September 2023, with a much more localised theme. Local business Ramsbury Brewing & Distilling Co. Ltd will be supporting as the headline sponsor.

With nearly 55,000 visitors expected, Newbury Show has a multitude of sponsorship opportunities & exhibitor trade spaces available as a platform to promote, sell, raise public profile and meet potential customers over two action packed days in September.

The Newbury Show are offering a more local feel to the 2023 Show and have announced a New Local Producers Stand Rate. Set in a designated area with other local producers, open space grass plots are available at a discounted rate of £300 + VAT. Plots are a fixed size of 3x3m. Local traders must be based within a 15-mile radius of the Showground (RG18 9QZ).

Larger Trade sites are also available plus Craft Hall Exhibitor stands and Food Hall stands for the 2-day show. Local businesses can book online: <https://showingscene.com/events/newbury-show-2023-sep-2023>

## **Environment**

### ***Solar together***

WBC are working in partnership with Solar Together Berkshire to help local homeowners and small businesses turn sunlight into electricity by



# **Solar Together**

investing into renewables through a group-buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage.

West Berkshire residents and small businesses can join this group-buying scheme which offers not just solar panels, but optional battery storage and EV charge points too. There's also retrofit battery storage for residents who have already invested in solar panels and are just looking to get more from the renewable energy they generate whilst increasing their independence from the grid. It is free to register and there is no obligation to go ahead with an installation.

### ***3 Years of WBC's Environment Strategy***

Three years ago, the Conservative administration were proud to publish WBC's Environment Strategy which outlines the steps WBC needs to take with partners to reach carbon neutrality. The Council has been very busy delivering projects across the district over the last three years and created the roadmap below showing the key achievements. From new recycling centres to flood alleviation schemes, WBC's climate action is helping both people and nature. Residents can read the Environment Strategy and previous roadmaps (in annual reports) on the webpage [here](#).





### Expansion of existing EV charge posts across West Berkshire

WBC have appointed ubitricity, one of the UK's leading charge point operators, to supply, install and manage up to 250 electric vehicle (EV) charge points across West Berkshire.



This will expand the existing charging infrastructure network to bring more publicly-available EV charge points for residents who don't have private off-street parking.

ubitricity will be deploying up to 250 charge points across West Berkshire using their bollard solutions, which draws power from existing streetlamps and is ideal for rapid residential rollouts, provide a low power, low cost and near-home charging option.

The rollout in West Berkshire is planned to be installed in key residential and commercial locations, allowing residents to easily charge hybrid and electric vehicles on the street where they live.

## Health

### Health and Wellbeing Board

Health and Wellbeing Board met on Thursday 13 July and discussed a number of very interesting subjects including:

- Building Berkshire Together: update on funding for the New Hospitals Programme and what this means for the redevelopment of the Royal Berkshire Hospital
- Better Care Fund Plan Year End 2022-23: This is a national programme for driving health and social care integration using pooled budgets and gives local authorities, through the Health and Wellbeing Boards, the ability to take more control over how those budgets are allocated
- Berkshire West Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy: Delivery Plan Review

- Local Response to Cost of Living Increases: updating the Board on the collective response to the impact on residents in West Berks of the rise in the cost of living

Papers and a recording of the meeting can be found [here](#)

### ***Place2Be – Improving Children’s Mental Health***

Anyone who is a parent or grandparent or carer for children will know that getting through the summer holidays can be quite a task! This organisation work with WBC in some schools and have a wealth of information on mental health, for both children and adults and in particular some hints and tips for support through the holidays. Tips and support for the holidays can be found online [here](#).

### **Current Consultations**

- [Memorial Fields Thatcham Flood Alleviation Scheme](#) – closes 6 August
- [Review of the Public Spaces Protection Order \(PSPO\) in Speen Lodge Court \(2023\)](#) – closes 18 August
- [Stockcross Active Travel Path \(Stockcross to A4\): Pre-Construction Feedback](#) – closes 18 August
- [West Berkshire Bus Survey 2023](#) – closes 10 September
- [Draft Statement of Licensing Policy 2023-2028](#) – closes 20 September

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